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## Fulbright's Fusillade

Before the criticisms by Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) of the Dominican Republic intervention are dismissed either as spleenish or divisive, we hope President Johnson and others will give due thought to the real burden of his complaint.

He was not criticizing Mr. Johnson. On that score he said: "On the basis of the information and counsel he received, the President could hardly have acted other than he did . . ." Then Fulbright went on to the nub of the matter: "It is very difficult to understand, however, why so much unsound advice was given him."

The advice, we must assume, was given by the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, and the intelligence sections of the armed forces.

It is unfortunate that security considerations — probably valid — prevent a fuller disclosure of the testimony given the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that prompted Fulbright's denunciation.

For if it is true, as Fulbright charges, that no threat existed warranting the pouring of 24,000 U.S. troops into the Dominican Republic, then this fact, coupled with the Bay of Pigs fiasco, discloses a weakness in U.S. intelligence that could one day lead to epic disaster. If this is indeed the lamentable state of our intelligence, it is not beyond imagining that the Communist powers could hatch a hoax plausible and elaborate enough to bring U.S. troops swarming into Brazil or Argentina or Venezuela or all three, to create a situation that would blast the inter-American alliance beyond all repair.

True, the preponderance of opinion normally regarded as "informed" points the other way. Sen Dirksen, for one, says that he agreed with the President's decision then, and still agrees with it. He says that the Communists were indeed building up such strength that they could have torn the country apart, and that "the President had to act." In this he concurs, of course, with the President himself, and with chiefs of the State Department, the Defense Department and the CIA.

Yet it is noteworthy that Fulbright does not stand alone. Supporting the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee is another prominent member of that committee, Sen. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), who agrees that there was "no major Communist threat" in Santo Domingo.

The American people can hope that Dirksen, and the President are right, and Fulbright and Mansfield wrong. And yet the history of U.S. intelligence operations since World War II has been marked with enough failures to warrant some doubt. We hope, therefore, that the matter will be explored further, and as publicly as basic security considerations will permit. For neither Fulbright nor Mansfield can be written off as a crackpot; both have earned the right to be taken seriously; neither is likely to be firing salvos at his own party leadership just for the sport of it. If there is substance to their charges, both Congress and the President have a responsibility to find out what is wrong and remedy the faults. If there is none the American people need to be solidly convinced of the fact.